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ABSTRACT

The incidence of school violence has increased in recent years. In response to the escalation, Deborah Prothrow-Stith developed a violence prevention curriculum to be taught in high schools; it has also been used in middle schools. The first section of this journal issue's report, "Confronting an Epidemic" offers details of Prothrow-Stith's program, the goal of which is to teach students anger management and good conflict-resolution skills. The program is 10 sessions in length, each session designed to last 1 class period. The sessions involve discussions on violence in America compared to other countries and how friend and family violence are a major part of the problem. The issue of fighting receives special attention and is the climax of the curriculum. The evidence of success of the curriculum lies in the anecdotal stories from teachers and principals who report fewer fighting incidents in the schools. The second article in this report, "A Little Window of Hope" describes a program implemented in a Boston high school by Anne Bishop with the assistance of Prothrow-Stith. Teaching peaceful conflict resolution is viewed as only one aspect of a peaceful society; all levels of society must be permeated. Students are shown homicide statistics and asked to share their points of view on fighting and violence in society. Rather than a pencil-and-worksheet approach to violence students are divided into groups and participate in role-playing activities. They identify the crucial points where a conflict can either lead to violence or be settled peacefully. The curriculum is designed to be taught by different methods and schools may make adjustments according to grade level and preferences of the administration. (BF)

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PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS



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RESEARCH AND THE CLASSROOM



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A CHANCE TO LIVE

"I find trying to survive in this world very hard, but when there's violence on the streets, it makes survival even harder. I think about how many innocent people get killed every day. I think about kids getting killed at young ages. I think about the elderly people, who have no one to do things for them. I think about the fear that they have each time they come out of their homes. I think about how some old people have to stay locked up in their own homes, because they are afraid to stay inside, and they are even more afraid to come out. I don't think life should be this way.

"I think about all these different gangs that are out on the streets, trying to take over different turfs, which don't even belong to any of them. Every day we hear that someone has been shot or stabbed. Why can't these young kids understand that they also are a part of this human race? Each day when I come home from school I stay in the house until the next morning, when it's time to go to school again. It's getting so it's not even safe to stay inside of your own home. When I leave school in the afternoon, I try to find a safer way to walk home. But there's no safe way to come. No matter which way you come, you always have that fear inside. I wish that everybody could stick together, as brothers and sisters. I wish that the day would come when people could walk the streets without fear of being shot, stabbed, robbed, or just plain molested.

"Tomorrow is another day. And I wonder what it will bring. But deep down inside I already know that it will be another day of trying to find a safe route home from school, seeing the kids on the streets trying to be bad, seeing some old person walking in fear, seeing the police cars, with their lights flashing, and their sirens on, seeing the ambulance coming and going, and seeing the youth of America being shot down, and killed, before they even had a chance to live."

—Prize-winning essay *

Mukiya Adams, 17 years old
Jeremiah E. Burke High School
Boston, MA

Reprinted with permission from Deadly Consequences *by Deborah Prothro-Stith, M.D. (with Michael Weissman), published by HarperCollins, 1991.*

CONFRONTING AN EPIDEMIC

ANNE TURNBAUGH LOCKWOOD

In this issue of Research and the Classroom, we explore the topic of preventing violence in our schools, expanding on material already presented in our quarterly, Focus in Change. In the Spring 1993 issue of Focus in Change, available from NCES, we examined the topic of youth in gangs from a variety of perspectives, including those of a youth worker with extensive experience with gang members, a former gang founder and leader who has changed his life direction, and a sociologist who spent ten years living with and studying a total of 37 gangs in three U.S. cities.

As we broaden our focus in this publication, we are especially interested in these questions: Can children be educated to shun violence? Can they be taught rational, non-violent ways to deal with anger and conflict? What can schools do to contribute to and participate in this particular type of learning? Does a violence prevention curriculum belong in schools? At what age is it wise to introduce conflict resolution skills? Finally, is there evidence that such educative efforts are successful?

We sought answers from Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., who is the author of the first violence prevention curriculum written for schools as well as the author of *Deadly Consequences* (with Michaela Weissman). Currently Assistant Dean for Government and Community Programs at Harvard University's School of Public Health, Prothrow-Stith was co-director of the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals Promotion Center for Urban Youth and also served as Commissioner of Public Health in Massachusetts from 1987 to 1989.

In our second article, we talk with a colleague of Prothrow-Stith's, Anne Bishop, who has worked to implement

Prothrow-Stith's violence prevention curriculum in schools for eleven years.

Deborah Prothrow-Stith first became aware of the pandemic nature of violence among adolescents when working as a resident physician in the emergency room at Boston's Brigham and Women Hospital. Night after night, she stitched up or



operated on teenagers who were victims of knifings, gunshot wounds, suicide attempts, or other violent episodes. Her experiences pushed her into conceptualizing violence prevention as a public health issue akin to the anti-smoking campaign or efforts to stop drunk driving.

In fact, what has been achieved by the public health campaign against smoking parallels what Prothrow-Stith wants to achieve in terms of preventing violence. She explains that working to change behaviors that surround violence is a mission that belongs in schools.

"When I started looking at violence as

a public health problem, health education naturally came to mind. It's one of the major strategies within public health," she begins. "Teaching in schools is one of the key ways that we can provide information consistently to a generation of children. We hope that the information becomes a part of their standard knowledge base and is incorporated into their day-to-day activities, their attitudes, and their behavior."

Part of the reason a violence prevention curriculum belongs in a school, Prothrow-Stith says, is because children in schools are a captive audience. "Why do you think about health education in the schools?" she asks rhetorically. "That's where the kids are." But she quickly adds that not all adolescents go to school, and for that reason, there is a need for additional strategies that can be employed outside the school site.

What Youth Are At Risk?

Are there youth who are especially fragile, particularly at risk for violence? Why are young African American males statistically high casualties of homicide? Prothrow-Stith, who is African

American, responds with care. "There are a combination of factors. Chronic urban poverty seems to be a major risk factor for homicide. Young Black men have been over-represented among those in that condition. And it may be that there is the anger and frustration of poverty, it may be that there is more television-watching and movie-going, it may be that there is less parenting, or fewer adult men actively parenting and being role models for non-violence.

"Or it may be a combination of all of those factors. When we look at the homicide studies, the issue of poverty is

the one that we're really measuring when we measure race.

"The children who are most at risk tend to be urban, tend to be poor, tend to be young men, and they tend to be children who have witnessed a lot of violence and been victims of violence in their early childhood development. I don't include race, because I think that the over-representation of young Black men in particular has to do with those other factors."

The Violence Prevention Curriculum

Prothrow-Stith's curriculum is ten sessions in length, each lasting approximately forty-five minutes to an hour. Their length was geared to fill a typical class period. The ten sessions are divided into three sections: The first comprise what she terms "stage-setting activities," the second deals with anger, and the third with role playing and strategies for handling anger.

She describes each of the three sections. "In the first three sessions we talk about violence in America compared to other countries. We talk about friend and family violence as the major part of our problem. In particular, we hone in on violence being a learned behavior that is preventable."

She explains that after the first section, students become aware that the usual cause of violence is an argument between two people who know each other. "In the second section, we deal with what makes us angry and how we handle anger. We list things that make you angry, we list what you can do with your anger, and then we talk about the things you can do about it—what is healthy and what is unhealthy."

Fighting receives special attention, she says. "That's the climax of the curriculum, because by this point we hopefully have students primed to prevent fighting."

She notes, "If teachers were going to add to what is offered in the curriculum, they would add sessions on conflict resolution, anger management, and perhaps specific issues of dating violence or family violence."

The curriculum was originally targeted

to ninth and tenth graders. Prothrow-Stith explains, because adolescents are particularly vulnerable to violence. "Their vulnerability has to do with peer pressure. It has to do with that sort of narcissism that they experience where every insult is a major insult. They feel center stage, as if all eyes are on them. One also sees a certain amount of risk-taking in adolescent children that one doesn't see in younger children."

"Even if we have taught good anger management and good conflict resolution skills to youngsters, I do think we have to work to redefine the hero for adolescents, to change the peer pressure so that it's not pressure to fight but pressure to solve the problem without fighting. If we could get the social norm among teenagers to be one where it is considered stupid to fight, then we have made some progress."

Another reason the curriculum is targeted toward ninth and tenth grades is that it includes a cost-benefit analysis of fighting, one that might be difficult for younger age groups to comprehend. "We talk about what the consequences would be if you had a job and got into a fight on the job, or if you were in a situation where you destroyed someone's property. Those things really need to mean something to the audience in order for them to make the kind of impact that we want."

But Prothrow-Stith believes it is necessary also to include younger children in violence prevention awareness and strategies. "The curriculum has been used in middle schools, high schools, and at most grade levels. Teachers who are skilled at adapting materials developmentally to younger ages can do that."

She emphasizes that violence prevention is not something intended only for one age group. "This is not an either-or situation. Sometimes people say to me, 'Why are you waiting until high school? Isn't that too late?' In some sense, you can say it's better if we did it earlier, and I would say it's better if we would do it throughout the educational experience. Things that we should teach children as they mature include how they recognize and handle

anger, how they get along with others, how they negotiate, and how they deal with their own increase in stress and anxiety."

How does a school embark upon implementing a program of violence prevention? Prothrow-Stith's reply comes without hesitation. "A school needs to have teachers who are interested in doing it, the support of the administration, some dedicated training time, some support throughout the implementation, and, in general, a commitment to not only helping the students but helping this society deal with the issue of violence."

The curriculum has been taught, for the most part, by classroom teachers. Prothrow-Stith notes, "It's often nice to have a woman and a man teach it, because they're role-modeling issues for boys and girls. In that sense you can address both of the gender issues."

Teacher training centers on becoming familiar with the curriculum and what to expect, and is available in videotape form or in a lengthier two-day version offered by staff at the National Institute for Violence Prevention. Regardless of the training, Prothrow-Stith emphasizes that school staff must confront their own feelings of anger. "Anyone who is going to teach it must come to grips with their own sense of anger and violence, how they handle their anger. Often during discussions students ask, 'What would you do if. . .?' It is necessary to be prepared to discuss how you handle your anger, not so much as a personal disclosure, but in a sense that it is very normal to get angry and that growing up and becoming an adult means learning how to deal with it."

Although she looks to schools to fill in a key chink of an educational plan intended to steer youth from violence, she indicts society for promoting, tolerating, and condoning violence. "This is not a problem that is caused by the schools," she says forcefully. "This is not a problem that is caused by the students in schools, but this is in fact a societal problem. Working in the schools is not enough."

She recounts a story told her by Anne

Bishop, her long-time colleague in implementing the curriculum [see *next article*]. "She called to tell me that she had a student who was very, very depressed. He had taken the curriculum, had actively participated in avoiding a fight, but had not found support among his friends for doing that, nor had he found support among his family. So even though he had prevented the fight, he was looked down upon for doing so."

She continues, "I can't stress enough that this is a society where we teach children that violence is funny, that it is entertaining, that it is successful, and that it is the superhero's first choice. We teach that it is the expected problem-solving behavior in certain situations, and the work we do in the schools is just one way to begin to address that."

Media images of violence help promulgate an unrealistic view of its consequences, she notes. "A colleague of mine who is a pediatrician shared an experience with me. A young man came into the emergency room who had been shot, really surprised at the pain he was in. Anybody knows if you get shot it's going to hurt. But then, the image of violence is that the good guys don't get shot, and if they do it's a minor little thing that inconveniences them."

This sort of naivete' is why part of Prothrow-Stith's educative mission with her violence prevention curriculum is to sensitize youth to what she terms "the hype around violence." She explains, "There isn't a lot of pain or sorrow or guilt. All of that is just mythology."

In the course of her research while writing the curriculum, Prothrow-Stith recounts that she was surprised to discover that half of the homicides in the U.S. occur between friends and family. "It was pretty shocking to me to find out that half of all homicides occur between friends and family."

"The other thing that pleasantly surprised me has been how receptive students are to these discussions, particularly those who are in the most difficult situations, perhaps poor urban com-

munities where there is a lot of violence. They are seeking ways out; they are seeking alternatives. They know that this is not right, and in a tragic way they know the pain of violence. They've been to the funerals."

She adds, "I am pleasantly and regularly surprised at how interested they can become in this, and how active they can become in mediation, in efforts to change the climate of the school. In one sense, it's because they have the most to lose."

Evidence of Success

What evidence does she have that the curriculum is achieving its desired effects? "The biggest indicator," Prothrow-Stith replies, "lies in the anecdotal stories that we hear from those who have taught it and from the principals in schools where it has been used over a period of time. In the school in Boston where we used it for three years, the principal felt that fights had been cut in half. Most of those who are teaching it are not only very satisfied with it, but feel quite clearly that there is an impact on the attitudes and behaviors of students."

Beyond anecdotal information about the curriculum's progress and success, she mentions a six-city evaluation of the curriculum. "It was limited in its conclusions because only four of the schools gave us complete data sets. When we analyzed them, the one finding that seemed to be significant and showed across all the schools was that students were less likely to report having a fight in the last week if they had gone through the curriculum than those who didn't have the curriculum."

She continues thoughtfully, "Either that represents a change in behavior, or it represents a change in attitude, where they don't want to tell you whether they had a fight or not. Either way it's considered a step in the right direction."

Beyond teaching a violence prevention curriculum, are there other ways in which school staff can stem the tide of violence? Are there special strategies that would help reduce violent incidents in or around

schools? Prothrow-Stith responds, "There are some techniques that can be used to de-escalate a situation where a fight is brewing. Teachers are able to use their body language, their voices, their perceptions about what is going on in ways to prevent violence."

She states that she is surprised by the number of times teachers are aware that an incident might happen prior to a tragedy. "The students knew, the parents knew, or the community knew, and they didn't do anything about it. It's as if we think violence is a natural, inevitable part of our lives and that we have to deal with it when it happens."

"That is the message of all of my work: This is a preventable problem, other countries don't have the problem that we have, and if we really put our minds to changing our attitudes and our behavior we could have much less of a problem."

"For teachers that's really an important message. There are skills you can teach students; there are skills you can learn yourself. I'm a much better parent now than I was before. I'm much better at handling my anger now than I was when I first started this."

In her book, *Deadly Consequences*, Prothrow-Stith writes that she considers learning itself to be a form of violence prevention. Why is that the case?

She replies, "One of the things that is clear is that students who are able to accomplish things in school and feel good about their accomplishments seem to have been inoculated when it comes to the issue of violence. Those students who are isolated by the education system consequently don't do well and find the system hostile toward them. They are often students who are more prone to participate in violence."

"A part of the challenge is to identify the strengths of each child, to figure out how to encourage each child. The challenge is not for the child or his or her family to prove that they are capable, but the challenge is for the school system to address the needs of that child, and to teach him."

A LITTLE WINDOW OF HOPE

ANNE TURNBAUGH LOCKWOOD

Anne Bishop became acquainted with Deborah Prothrow-Stith during the time she was employed at a neighborhood health center in Dorchester, MA. After Bishop accepted a high school position for which she needed to set up a health office and teach health education, she was asked by the school's administration to remedy the problem of student fights in the school. She called upon Prothrow-Stith, who was developing her violence prevention curriculum at the time, and the two piloted the curriculum in the school. Bishop has been involved actively with the violence prevention curriculum—both as a teacher and a trainer of other teachers—for approximately eleven years.

Anne Bishop wants to make it crystal clear that no one program or curricular approach to violence prevention—no matter how well-designed—is the lone solution to violence. Instead, she sees a violence prevention curriculum—as well as the role of schools—as one critical piece in an all-out campaign against violence.

"Violence prevention is just like smoking prevention," she says in a precise voice. "You have to permeate the society at all levels with the information. You can't smoke on a bus or a train or an airplane or in restaurants. If people ask you to please stop smoking, most people will do that now that we understand its risks.

"Therefore, kids have to hear about violence in school, parents have to hear it from their primary care providers, adolescents have to hear it from theirs, workplaces have to encourage conflict resolution. It has to permeate the society."

What is the role of schools? "We're not the solution," Bishop replies. "We're a piece of the solution. School is a place where you can hold kids for a certain amount of time. If your school and your teachers buy into this, then you can

change ideas about socially acceptable things to do."

Bishop learned to teach the violence prevention curriculum from Prothrow-Stith by watching her teach it. At the time, she was working in a small, 350-student Catholic high school in Boston's inner city. As part of the plan to implement the curriculum, Prothrow-Stith and Bishop taught it to all the freshmen, and spoke with all the teachers in the school. Three teachers received special training and were assigned to the school's planning center, a program developed for students who perceived—on their own—that their behavior was spinning out of control or who were referred to it by teachers.

Bishop looks back on her eight-year tenure at the school and says, "By the time I left, we had eliminated fighting as a major problem. It wasn't just because of the curriculum, but also because there was a team of people who were involved in working with students about this issue.

"The plan for violence prevention at the school was to communicate the idea that in this school we did not fight, we negotiated our differences."

Presently head of the school-based health center at Brighton High School in Boston, Bishop emphasizes that the key to the violence prevention curriculum's success is that it is not prescriptive, but requires that students find their own answers to the thorny problems of violence that confront them.

"We start with freshman, who absolutely don't believe they have any choice other than to fight. The curriculum allows them to find a better choice."

She relates an anecdote about a student. "This Fall a student came into my office and said, 'You gotta let me chill out here because I'm going to kill somebody. If I see his face, I'm going to kill him.'"

"But he came and asked for help. We called the man who does the counseling with his grade, and he came and did a

mediation with him and the other student, and it was resolved."

Bishop sees such incidents as evidence of success. "Last year he was in a knife fight; this year he came and asked for help. There's no way to explain how powerful that can be."

Finding New Choices: The Curriculum

A non-prescriptive approach is, in fact, a sharp blade cutting through the curriculum, and is evident at the first session when teachers tell students they are simply sharing information with them, not teaching or telling them what choices to make. Bishop says, "We ask a lot of questions and we make a lot of lists. We ask: 'What do you think of when you see the word violence?'"

"Then we do a web chart, and that explains to the kids that there is a lot of violence in our society, and they are going to be affected by it."

However, helplessness is a concept that the curriculum combats. "Everyone has an anger moment," Bishop admits, "and there is a lot about violence we cannot control. But there is a lot about us that we *can* control—our interpersonal relations—and that's what we continue to concentrate on."

After showing students homicide statistics and the preponderance of homicides where people know one another, teachers emphasize that students can change some of the risk factors that lead to homicide.

"We say: 'You can choose not to have a handgun available. You can choose not to drink. You can learn to solve your problems without getting into arguments. And you can hang with the kids who won't be likely to get into trouble.'"

She adds, "There's a big difference between hanging out at your friend's house and hanging out on a street corner, where somebody else is likely to be

hanging out too."

Anger is dissected as well. "We ask: What makes you a little angry? A lot angry? What do you do when you're angry? What are healthy or unhealthy things to do? Does it hurt you? Does it hurt someone else?"

"If you do fight, what is good about it? What are the bad things?" The list for the bad things includes: "Your parents get mad at you, you get suspended, you get expelled, you get arrested, you go to court, you go to jail, you get a record, you have a probation officer, you get hurt, you hurt somebody else, you feel guilty, you get the wrong kind of reputation."

Reaching this point in the curriculum is what Prothrow-Stith points to as the climax. "Kids understand that there's a lot more to lose than to gain from fighting. What you gain from fighting is when you win. You might still salvage your reputation if you lose, but you get hurt if you lose."

However, Bishop's experiences with students have kept her a realist. She explains that many youth at this point will not agree that they will not fight. "But you've broken the barrier for them in terms of saying it's the best thing for them to do. It's not, but it's what they still feel they're going to do—they won't give it up. And we should never expect that the ones who are committed to fighting will give it up," she adds.

Why Violence Prevention?

If that's the case, why teach a program on violence prevention? Bishop responds, "At the very beginning of the course there are kids who know that fighting is bad. There are also kids who are going to fight no matter what you say. And there is a group in the middle. By the time the course is over, the kids who aren't going to fight have a lot more information to support that choice. The kids in the middle are given a lot more options, and the kids who were going to fight are still going to fight."

She adds quietly, "My experience is that even in that group somebody makes a

change. It may not happen until they are seniors, but I have some real success stories. These stories come from one person saying, 'You have a choice.' Maybe some kids could have made it and life just got in the way for them. I don't know. But I do know that teaching this is worth doing, because if two hundred kids take the course and one kid changes his behavior, it's worthwhile."

Rather than a pencil-and-worksheet approach to violence, one integral component of the curriculum includes role-playing. "I divide the kids into groups of five or six and they set up a fight scene. It must occur in school, and they cannot swear. We videotape it."

Typical fights revolve around boyfriend-girlfriend scenarios, Bishop says. "They are girl-boy, he said-she said situations, or looking at somebody and assuming it meant something bad. Or bumping into somebody and assuming it was on purpose."

The role-playing starts out with students far away from each other, moving closer, arguing, getting closer to each other, pushing, showing their fists, and then actually engaging in a fight.

"We go back and look at it and show where it might have stopped. We ask: 'Were there instigators? Were there people who didn't mind their own business? Were there people who egged you on? What's the role of the onlooker in this situation?'"

Almost to herself, she notes, "Onlookers can make fights worse. In fact, one of the big successes of the curriculum has been that we encourage kids to go back to class. A lot of kids will do that now who wouldn't have before."

"Then we start looking at the problem and asking how it could have been solved. The kids come up with solutions."

Bishop is proud that at this point students are engaged in strategies to solve the problem in a non-violent manner. "It's easier for them to solve the problem because it's a game they're playing. But it's a very important game, because it's giving them experience solving the problem without violence, which is something that

they may not have seen in their upbringing and that they don't experience with their friends. In the end, the kids get a calming sense out of the possibility that this could work. They will still argue with you that it's not possible a lot of the time, but there's a little window of hope."

A Little Window of Hope

Bishop builds from this crucial point, telling students that it is possible to have a non-violent school. "I say to them, if we had a school where everybody knew that this was a possibility, then it would be more likely that some of the time it would happen. Although it's not in the curriculum, we talk a lot about who they want to be, do they want to hurt somebody, do they want to be able to stand up for themselves without getting into a fight."

She pauses. "If you want to rely on the good parts of you, you can solve these problems in other ways, and you can feel good about solving them in other ways. We try to give them positive feedback when they solve these problems positively."

But that is not enough, she says, pointing to the necessity for role models. "We ask them to pick a teacher they can trust. The best hope in a school is that you convince more and more of the adults to be available to kids, to help them negotiate. Then you give your teachers enough training so that they can do that."

One of the biggest difficulties, Bishop acknowledges, in teaching non-violent strategies of managing conflict to students is their limited experience with such a construct. "If you have no experience solving problems with your parents, your peers, your neighborhood setting, it's a foreign subject to you. There are kids who are told by their parents to be aggressive. When they have had no experience and if they truly feel oppressed, it's very difficult."

She points to Prothrow-Stith's book, *Deadly Consequences*, in which she argues that adolescent males are treated differently than adolescent females, and

adolescent minority males are treated differently than adolescent white males.

"They're treated like they are a problem, a criminal element. People are afraid of them, and kids begin to take advantage of that. It can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. You get kids who have been having these negative experiences with authority figures, and then you try and tell them they can solve their problems with conflict resolution. They can quite honestly tell you that you just don't know what you're talking about.

"And they could be right," she notes, "because they would have to have an incredible amount of inner strength to walk past the trouble that they have to face every day. No one is perfect at this."

How should schools implement a program in violence prevention and conflict resolution? "It's most important that the administration agrees that they need to do something, and that a committee is formed. Sometimes that doesn't happen, and concerned staff can do it on their own. But it's a lot better if the administration agrees to it and someone from the administration participates.

"The best team consists of all support service personnel in the school. In our school, our student support service group includes a student support service coordinator, who is someone that the school designates to coordinate all the support programs for students in the school. And it includes discipline coordinators, the pupil adjustment counselor, the guidance counselor and people from the outside agencies in the school.

"We meet once a week to talk about referrals and issues. When that group decided to take on violence prevention, a subcommittee was formed. If your school already has a support group meeting, that's the place to start. Get a couple of people to agree to meet about violence prevention and report back to the group.

"Then you try to identify what the problems are in your school. In our school, the problems were in the corridors and in

the cafeteria, which is pretty common for a high school."

Bishop points out that often there are solutions as simple as a different schedule which will reduce commotion and potential trouble. Beyond what she terms "mechanical solutions," she explains that the violence prevention program at Brighton began gradually and was introduced through English classes in two lesson plans.

She remarks, "The students and the teachers really enjoyed it, because part of the approach was to use a different way of speaking to each other. Instead of saying: 'Take off your hat!', you say: 'I need you to take off your hat because it's a school rule and I'm supposed to be enforcing the school rules. I need your cooperation. Please take off your hat.'

"It's a whole different approach," she explains.

Following the condensed introduction to the curriculum, Brighton's headmaster gave permission to teach the curriculum in its entirety the following year to the entire freshman class. "You have to be flexible," Bishop points out. "We looked at it as an overall problem. We were able to make some internal structural changes that helped decrease the violence, and we were able to teach the curriculum. Each school must come up with its own plan, but you need the administration's support behind it. And you need someone who is a resource person."

Is a violence prevention program necessary for all schools, even those without visible, outstanding discipline problems? Bishop's reply is succinct. "I don't think there's a school that doesn't need to have its kids learn to resolve conflict better."

The indicator that a program is needed, she maintains, is simple: adolescence. "I don't think you have to go beyond that. Adolescents don't know how to negotiate their needs without either being too quiet or too abrasive. It's the rare person that knows how to state their needs in a non-threatening way or in a way that will get what they really want."

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